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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 000499

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OSD/P FOR ZACCOR/GRAFF; JCS/J5 FOR MANTIPLY; EUCOM FOR SHARP

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN: MOD POLICY DIRECTOR ON DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP

Classified By: POL Couns Kathy Fitzpatrick for reasons 1.4 b & d.

¶1. (C) Spanish Ministry of Defense (MOD) acting Director for Policy (DIGENPOL) Admiral Enrique Perez Ramirez told a visiting GAO team and Emboffs on February 17 that the mil-to-mil relationship is strong overall but that there are some "details" that the allies need to resolve. He emphasized that Spain has given the US full use of Spanish bases for more than 50 years and has never wavered in this support. Perez Ramirez noted MOD's strong desire to conclude an MOU that would regulate the activities of the US Navy Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) and Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI) in Spain. This, he indicated, was envisioned in the 2002 Agreement on Defense Cooperation (ADC). He expressed concern about a recent US proposal for the MOU, and said that he hoped that the issue could be resolved soon. Perez Ramirez also noted MOD's desire for a meeting in 2006 of the High Level Defense Committee. END SUMMARY.

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STRONG 50 YEAR RELATIONSHIP  
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¶2. (C) The GAO team met with Perez Ramirez as part of its investigation into how the US can most effectively cooperate with host nations on force protection and anti-terrorism issues. Perez Ramirez explained to the team the 50-plus year history of the US military's presence in Spain. He said that permitting the US forces to use the Rota naval station and Moron air base is the most important military support that Spain gives to the US, and emphasized that Spain has never wavered on this issue. Perez Ramirez said that Spanish military feels a stronger connection to the US than to other NATO countries because the Spain-US relationship is older. The US military worked with the Spanish military when no one else would. Spain got used to US military training and adopted US procedures for years before joining NATO. Perez Ramirez also noted that the Spanish military is a good customer of US technology (most recently purchasing AEGIS for Spain's new frigates; weapons system for Spain's new S-80 submarines; and Tomahawk missiles) but said that Spain would like to see defense sales as a two-way street with US purchasing more from Spain (aside from CASA CN-295 airplane sale to USCG and defense satellite system).

¶3. (C) According to Perez Ramirez, the MOU on force protection that Spain and the US signed in April 2002 - just months after the Sept 11, 2001 attacks on the US - showed that Spain is willing and able to move quickly to address emerging threats. The US made a request and Spain delivered. Perez Ramirez said that Spain would be happy to make revisions to the force protection MOU if the US is concerned

about new terrorist threats. He pointed out that during the past 30 years of terrorist attacks in Spain, which caused over one thousand deaths, there has been no terrorist attack on a military base. (NOTE: He referred to approximately 800 deaths attributed to ETA, plus some 200 caused by the March 11, 2004 train bombings. END NOTE.) Perez Ramirez said that MOD cooperates closely with Ministry of Interior on anti-terrorism and force protection issues.

14. (C) Perez Ramirez said that MOD is willing to discuss any issue or need with the US, but wants the US to be considerate and not to try to impose US procedures or give orders. He asked for appropriate interaction between sovereign nations and suggested that the US side has at times shown a lack of respect, the current NCIS/OSI MOU proposal being a prime example of such disrespect.

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ISSUE OF THE DAY: NCIS/OSI MOU  
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15. (C) Perez Ramirez said that the US had agreed in 2002 in the ADC (Article 17.6) to negotiate a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to regulate the activities of the US's Navy Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) and USAF Office of Special Investigations (OSI) in Spain, but four years later, there continues to be US opposition to concluding such an agreement. Nonetheless, he said that the political decision - to allow NCIS/OSI to conduct its force protection reviews and criminal investigations in Spain - was made in 2002 and it is just a matter of implementing that policy decision via the MOU.

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FUTURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP

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16. (C) Perez Ramirez said that the Permanent Committee (PC), where US and Spanish military staffs sit side-by-side, is critical because the bilateral Agreement on Defense Cooperation is complex and requires dedicated staff for implementation. He pointed to the ability of the PC to respond quickly (e.g., to provide emergency flight clearances) because the two staffs know each other and are physically co-located. He went on to say that the MOD believes that the High Level Defense Committee (HLDC) is just as important as the PC. The HLDC sets policy; the PC implements. He expects the HLDC to meet this year, but said that it might be "before the summer or after." (NOTE: A HLDC meeting was canceled last fall, but one took place in the US in May 2005 on the margins of MOD Bono's meeting with SecDef. Spain had hoped to have a meeting this spring.) Perez Ramirez offered several possible discussion topics for the next HLDC, including the oft-repeated need to ensure that Spanish military personnel in the US enjoy the same benefits as US personnel in Spain. He also talked about the need for written agreements to replace "gentlemen's agreements" regarding potential port calls by nuclear and prepositioned crisis response ships.

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COMMENT  
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17. (C) MOD's insistence on finalizing an NCIS/OSI MOU seems not to be a direct reaction to any particular event but simply an attempt to assert itself as an equal partner in the relationship with the US. This is a theme in the US-Spain political-military relationship that spans both the Zapatero and Aznar governments.

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